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Robert Cooperman

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The Diva Lucrezia Falcone Arrives in Gold Creek After the Death of Reverend Burden

by Robert Cooperman

When last I deigned
to perform for oafs and sluts
among the peaks my voice dwarfs,
Pastore Burden admonished
his congregation that to listen
to me was a sin greater than murder.
So I shed no tears for the vile man.

That time, a woman was hanged
for killing the man who beat her,
I commissioned a tragic opera
based on her life story,
even badmen sobbing at her fate.
Now, I return to perform
The Death of Angelica,
her real name prosaic as pyrite;
her looks enough to give pause
to even Hugo's bell-ringer:
myself an angel of passion,
William Cody once
my golden-haired seraph.



My manager maneuvers my return
to the opera houses of Europe,
to avenge myself on those singers
whose careers hoarsely soared
in the beds of impresarios,
my voice purer than a choirful
of Viennese castrati.

I'll commission a new opera:
Pastore Burden stabbed by his wife
for his many infidelities;
she'll turn the blade on herself—
existence unbearable without
her demon preacher.

How opera improves on life!



Photo by Dawn Walker

To be continued in future issues

These poems are part of a collection entitled *The Widow's Burden*.

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